In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (cancelled)

2. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 22, wherein the guide rails are substantially parallel and directed towards said first main electrode and have a length that is several times larger than the width of the auxiliary spark gap.

3. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 22, wherein the first auxiliary ~~electrodes~~ electrode and the second auxiliary electrode are protected from the effect of the plasma in the main spark gap by being arranged in a protected position relative to the main spark gap.

4. (previously amended) The device according to claim 3, wherein the auxiliary spark gap is arranged adjacent to said second main electrode and located some distance away from the main spark gap as viewed in the direction of the main spark gap.

5. (cancelled)

6. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~5~~ 22, wherein the shielding device ~~is provided with~~ comprises an opening.

7. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 22, wherein the main spark gap is designed for a movable arcing path via the inherent magnetic field.

8. (currently amended) The device according to claim 7, wherein ~~the~~ each of the first main electrode and the second main electrode is annular.

9. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 22, wherein one of the guide rails of the triggering device is at ~~the~~ a same potential as said second main electrode of the main spark gap.

10. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 22, ~~wherein it comprises~~ further comprising:

a mechanical contact device connected in parallel with the main spark gap.

11. (currently amended) The device according to claim 10, ~~wherein~~ further comprising:

a second hermetic enclosure ~~encloses~~ enclosing the mechanical contact device.

12. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 11, wherein each of the first hermitic enclosure and the second hermetic enclosure encloses a gaseous medium under overpressure.

13. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1, wherein~~ 22, further

comprising:

an electric drive circuit ~~is~~ adapted to generate the arc in the auxiliary spark gap, ~~in which~~ the drive circuit comprising a primary coil for operating the mechanical contact device ~~is~~ connected in series.

14. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 22, wherein ~~it~~ the device is designed as a high-voltage protective device for an electric system, and ~~that~~ wherein the triggering device is adapted to be supplied with energy direct from the fault current of ~~the~~ a line.

15. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 22, wherein the triggering device is adapted to be supplied with energy from an energy magazine, which in turn is supplied with energy from ~~the~~ a line during normal operation thereof.

16. (currently amended) The device according to claim ~~1~~ 22, wherein the triggering device is adapted to be supplied with energy from a source of energy that is independent of ~~the~~ a line.

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) Use of a device according to claim ~~1~~ 22 for quickly closing an electric high-voltage circuit.

20. (previously amended) The use according to claim 19 as overvoltage protection device for a series capacitor.

21. (currently amended) An overvoltage protection device for a series capacitor, wherein the overvoltage protection device comprises a device according to claim ~~1~~ 22.

22. (new) A device for quick closing of an electric high-voltage circuit, the device comprising:

a first main electrode and a second main electrode with a main spark gap therebetween;

a triggering device comprising a first auxiliary electrode and a second auxiliary electrode with an auxiliary electrode gap therebetween, the triggering device being configured to generate an arc in the auxiliary spark gap for igniting an arc in the main spark gap, each auxiliary electrode comprising a guide rail each having a length that is larger than a width of the auxiliary spark gap, the guide rails being configured to move under the influence of a generated inherent magnetic field an arc into the main spark gap, and wherein the first auxiliary electrode and the second auxiliary electrode are adapted to be protected from an effect of plasma formed in the main spark gap;

a first hermetic enclosure enclosing the main spark gap and the auxiliary spark gap; and

a shielding device arranged between the guide rails and the main spark gap.

23. (new) A method for quickly closing an electric high-voltage circuit, the method comprising:

generating with a triggering device an arc between a first main electrode and a second main electrode of a main spark gap;

generating where necessary an arc between a first auxiliary electrode and a second auxiliary electrode in an auxiliary spark gap associated with the triggering device, whereby an arc in the main spark gap may be ignited with the aid of the arc in the auxiliary spark gap; and

bringing the arc in the auxiliary spark gap to move into the main spark gap via guide rails and under the influence of inherent magnetic fields,

wherein the auxiliary electrodes are protected from the effect of plasma formed in the main spark gap, the main spark gap and the auxiliary spark gap are enclosed in a hermetic enclosure, and a shielding device is arranged between the guide rails and the main spark gap.